



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **Recreation Commission Minutes 4-12-2011**

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, April 12, 2011

Approved

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7 PM on the first floor of the Arlington Senior Center on Tuesday, April 12, 2011.

Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Don Vitters, Jen Rothenberg and Jim Robillard. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly.

Members of the public included: Robin Vaghese, Sue Doctrow, Bill Carson, Greg Porfido, Kristin Garrigus, Jeanne Leary and Adam Glick.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Vitters motioned to approve the minutes as amended of the March 8, 2011 meeting. Motion was seconded by Mr. Robillard and approved 4-0.

### **Open Forum – Public Comments**

No comments from the public.

### **Capital Improvement Project Update**

Robbins Farm Slide – Mr. Connelly reviewed the latest proposal from Reale Associates to remove and repair the slides. The Commission discussed what the best course of action would be and noted that based on the report of Reale Associates immediate action is necessary. Ms. Rothenberg asked that Mr. Connelly look into additional options and report back to the Commission.

Wellington Tennis Courts – Mr. Connelly explained that at the last Conservation Commission review it was asked that due to the river protection act some mediation be added to the project. This included leaving a patch of land near the river front untouched and protected.

Thompson School Basketball Court – No report.

Peirce School – Ms. Garrigus reviewed the need for work to be done at the Peirce School playground and tot lot. Ms. Garrigus reviewed a letter from the Peirce School Principal and some cost estimates the PTO has received from Leonard & Associates to repair some of the drainage issues.

Mr. Connelly and Ms. Mayer stated that Peirce play area repair was in the multi-year capital plan but was pushed out by the Capital Improvement Committee. Ms. Mayer reviewed the process and also noted that the tot lot in the upper playground was school property and not under the jurisdiction of the Park Commission. Any work in this area would need to be prioritized through the school dept. The Commission discussed the drainage issues and potential options. The Commission asked Mr.

Connelly to set-up a meeting with their Capital Committee liaisons to try to find out how we can pull this project back into the schedule and to again discuss the need for small project/maintenance/repair funding. Mr. Connelly will also work with Ms. Garrigus and the school to keep them updated on the issue.

#### **Off leash Implementation (Article 36) Monthly Review**

Mr. Connelly and Ms. Mayer reviewed the results of the March 14<sup>th</sup> Board of Selectmen meeting with the Commission. Mr. Connelly reviewed several action plan items, including quarterly Town e-mail alerts, permanent signage for Robbins & Menotomy and a request for input from those Friends groups.

The Commission reviewed the correspondence received.

Mr. Connelly introduced Mr. Porfido and reviewed his e-mail suggestions with regards to the plan. Mr. Porfido stated that he was not against Article 36 but thought a couple of additional rules would help the plan succeed. Mr. Porfido stated that he believed that specific locations needed to be identified for the plan to work. The Commission reviewed the suggested locations which were:

- Behind the Backstop
- Along the Third Base Line
- Just below the overlook area on the plateau at the base of the sledding hill

Mr. Porfido stated that it was unacceptable to have unleashed dogs along the border of the park, along the road and adjacent to the playground.

Ms. Mayer stated that his suggested areas were currently being used, and that current off-leash participants are staying away from areas near the playground, as was requested at numerous public meetings. Mr. Porfido agreed but suggested that for future users this would give specific guidelines. The Commission attempted to determine the specific problems that are being caused with the areas currently being used and suggested that limiting areas further could be counterproductive.

Mr. Porfido's second suggestion was to limit the number of off leash dogs in the park. Ms. Mayer and Mr. Porfido discussed what an appropriate number should be and how any limitation would work practically. Mr. Porfido was reminded that at the Robbins Farm meeting with Judge Kass it was determined that limiting the number of dogs allowed was deemed to be unenforceable.

The Commission discussed how an appropriate number could be identified for any park. Mr. Porfido stated that 20 off leash dogs could not be a controllable situation. Ms. Doctrow stated that it depended more on the type of dog and owner's control than only the number of dogs. Mr. Larson suggested that Robbins doesn't have more than 12-15 dogs at any one time and when groups start to get large sub-groups tend to break off and move to other areas.

Ms. Rothenberg stated that she had an issue with limiting the number of dogs or people at a public facility.

The Commission discussed the issue of limiting the number of dogs and adapting more refined guidelines with those in attendance. Mr. Connelly stated that this was a flexible document that could be amended based on the current practices. The Commission discussed wanting to wait until more time elapsed including the busier spring and summer seasons before making changes, so that changes could be comprehensive. Mr. Porfido stated that he believed that thinking to be flawed and felt the program could be changed several times if need be, while the Commission feels that changing the rules too often could be confusing and lead to less compliance.

#### **Stanton Foundation and Thorndike Field OLRA Update**

Mr. Connelly stated that the task force would be meeting on May 4<sup>th</sup> with the landscape architect to review preliminary design options. Mr. Connelly stated that he did not believe a spring build was probable at this point. Mr. Connelly and Ms. Mayer stated that a late summer build was more likely.

#### **Rink and Recreation Update**

Mr. Connelly stated that registration continues to be strong in the recreation programs and that the spring/summer brochure was just released.

Mr. Connelly stated that financially the rink should bring in more revenue in rink fees than ever before and noted that the rink would remain open longer into April, offering additional public skating and school parties. Mr. Connelly stated that this year's additional revenues should help offset some of the unexpected capital expenses.

### **Special Requests**

Arlington Center for the Arts – Spy Pond Field - Approved with noted restrictions – 4-0  
Kimberley Harding – Menotomy Rocks Park – Approved with trash in and trash out – 4-0

Summer Street Planting – Jeanne Leary – Commission requested a detailed planting plan. Mr. Connelly read to the Commission several positive comments regarding the rink staff and user behavior from Ms. Leary to the Commission.

AHS Use of Tennis Courts after 6 PM – Mr. Connelly stated that this issue was worked out between AHS and the Recreation Office

Leslie Kilgore, Ottoson – Robbins Farm - Approved with trash in and trash out – 4-0  
Cary Conrad, Soap Box Derby – Robbins Farm - Approved with noted restrictions – 4-0  
Great Expectations – Summer Street Play ground - Approved with trash in and trash out – 4-0  
Rev William Albright – Robbins Farm – Approved with trash in and trash out – 4-0

### **Other Business**

Request to replace missing basketball hoop at Robbins Farm Park – The Commission discussed this issue with Mr. Varghese. Mr. Varghese stated that he would investigate fundraising possibilities. Mr. Connelly estimated the total replacement cost with installation to be \$4,000 and would check the court area to determine the feasibility of the replacement.

Rain Garden at Spy Pond Preliminary Plans – A group within the Town, led by the Planning Dept., has received a grant for a demonstration rain garden site. Ms. Mayer reviewed with the Commission possible rain garden locations that had been discussed with her. The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to review the site at Spy Pond. Ms. Rothenberg asked for a planting plan to be submitted to the Commission. Mr. Connelly will discuss this with Ms. Joey Glushko.

Handicap Accessibility – Mr. Connelly stated that he had a very positive meeting with Mr. Jack Jones of the Disability Commission. Mr. Connelly stated that they reviewed the portable restroom policy as well as the status of the current play ground equipment.

Commission Opening Status – Mr. Connelly stated that several very qualified candidates had applied and interviews were being held. The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to inquire about the possibility of having two associate memberships.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation